

OPENING STATEMENT OF REP. PAT SC ROEDER  
CHAIRWOMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE  
AT HEARINGS ON SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE  
APRIL 13, 1984

Today is the final day of hearings this Subcommittee will hold as part of its five year review of the Senior Executive Service. It has been a long process, but I believe it will result in a comprehensive and useful record. I have no doubt that the SES will be continued. Nevertheless, these hearings have convinced me that we have two very serious problems relating to the SES, in particular, and the entire career workforce, in general.

The first problem is that our mix of political appointees and career civil servants is becoming poisoned by too many of the former and too few of the latter. Not only does the presence of so many political appointees effectively preclude skilled public servants from reaching the top of their profession, it also means that poorly-trained, inexperienced, and short-term appointees set policies which career people must implement, whether those policies make any sense or not. Relations between career and political people have deteriorated. The SES did not cause this problem and the fact that it has gotten worse over the five years of existence of the SES is probably coincidental. Still, for the SES to achieve its objectives, this persistent problem must be addressed.

The second problem is that we do a lousy job in nurturing and rewarding civil servants. Most immediately, this has to do with capping pay, cutting bonuses, and threatening retirement programs.

The more damaging error, however, is in undermining the morale and self-confidence of senior executives by denigrating their performance and cutting them out of decision making. Any employer who treats its employees poorly is soon going to end up with poor employees. We are rapidly moving in this direction.

The Subcommittee will be working on legislation and writing reports on the Senior Executive Service, based on the results of these hearings. So, if anyone has anything to add, the time is now. The hearings record will close in one month.

Our first panel of witnesses consists of three charter members of the SES who have received bonuses from both President Reagan and President Carter.